

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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## SELF-SERVING STORE.

1,242,872.

Specification of Letters Patent.

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*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, CLARENCE SAUNDERS, a citizen of the United States, residing at Memphis, Shelby county, and State of Tennessee, have invented and discovered certain new and useful Improvements in Self-Serving Stores, of which the following is a specification.

The object of my said invention is to provide a store equipment by which the customer will be enabled to serve himself and, in so doing, will be required to review the entire assortment of goods carried in stock, conveniently and attractively displayed, and after selecting the list of goods desired, will be required to pass a checking and paying station at which the goods selected may be billed, packed, and settled for before retiring from the store, thus relieving the store of a large proportion of the usual incidental expenses, or overhead charges, required to operate it, all as will be hereinafter more fully described and claimed.

One purpose of the invention is to provide an arrangement for distributing the merchandise of a store in such a manner that the goods may be selected and taken by the customers themselves while making a circuitous path through the store; and whereby a large number of customers may be accommodated at the same time without confusion, and in an expeditious manner.

Another purpose is to utilize all the available floor space of the room to the best advantage; to dispense with the employment of many clerks who are usually engaged to wait upon the customers; and to insure that the customers become acquainted with the variety of lines of goods in the store and with the various items in the several lines.

It is also contemplated to have a supply or stock room located immediately in the rear of and adjacent to the sales department and so communicating therewith that said sales department may be constantly kept fully stocked; and it is also a consideration that said system of buying be offered to the public as a novelty in shopping or marketing.

The accompanying drawings, on which similar reference characters indicate corresponding parts, illustrate an arrangement of a store equipment and furniture, such as I have found suitable to accomplish the purposes above stated. In said drawings—

Figure 1 is a perspective view illustrating

the interior of a store as seen from the front end thereof, arranged and equipped in accordance with my invention,

Fig. 2 is a horizontal plan view,

Fig. 3 is a front plan, and

Fig. 4 a longitudinal section.

Referring to the construction in further detail, the store consists of a room provided with front and rear partitioning walls 5 and 6, dividing the floor space 7 into a lobby (forming an entrance and exit room) 8, at the front; a sales department 9, in the middle; and a supply or stock room 10 at the rear of the building, all proportioned with regard to the size of the store and the particular kind of business for which it is designed.

The sales department 9 has two rows of merchandise display cabinets or holders 11 arranged against the side walls of the room, and intermediate of these a series of display cabinets 12. Said cabinets 12 are constructed with shelves on opposite faces and are arranged in the room in line with and spaced from each other and have their respective alternate ends spaced from the partition walls 5 and 6 to provide passage-ways 13. The spaces between the cabinets form aisles 14 which, with passage-ways 13, form a circuitous path between the respective rows of shelving or cabinets 11 and 12. This circuitous path must be traversed by every purchaser who enters the sales room, and, while following the path, the customer has displayed before him for selection, the varied stock of goods that is offered for sale. The different kinds of goods are contained in packages suitable for convenient handling and assorted in lots of the different classes, as required to accommodate the different needs of different customers and enable them to conveniently select what they want of each item, all as will be understood.

The two display cabinets 11, on the side walls of the store, extend for the full length of the sales room, and at the rear end of the room, i. e. at the partition wall 6, said cabinets 11 are connected by similar cabinets, or shelving, 15, while cabinets 12 are only a distance apart to provide aisles of convenient width, and thereby all of the available space of the sales room is utilized to the best advantage. A portion of one of the display cabinets 12, preferably the forward part of the middle display cabinet, has constructed therein a refrigerator 16 (see Figs.